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SECRET NOFORN NOCONTRACT
BRIEF 220503Z
TO: [REDACTED] ROUTINE MEA BRIEF

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST BRIEF [REDACTED] FOR 22 APRIL 1988.

FROM: DDI/O/CPAS.

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1. PANAMA: SITUATION REPORT

OFFICER PURGED

DEFENSE CHIEF NORIEGA HAS DISMISSED FORMER AMBASSADOR TO
ISRAEL, LIEUTENANT COLONEL HERRERA HASSAN, FROM THE MILITARY.
[REDACTED] THE RATIONALE FOR HERRERA'S
REMOVAL WAS HIS FAILURE TO OBEY NORIEGA'S ORDER TO RETURN TO PANAMA
AFTER COMPLETING HIS ASSIGNMENT IN ISRAEL EARLY LAST MONTH. [REDACTED]

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NORIEGA HAS LONG VIEWED HERRERA, WHO IS PRO-US AND WELL RESPECTED BY FELLOW OFFICERS, AS A RIVAL AND HAS KEPT HIM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY THROUGH FOREIGN POSTINGS. NORIEGA APPARENTLY ORDERED HIS RETURN AFTER SUSPECTING THAT HERRERA WAS INVOLVED IN THE COUP ATTEMPT LAST MONTH AND MIGHT ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH WASHINGTON. WITH HERRERA'S DISMISSAL, THE MILITARY HAS LOST ONE OF ITS FEW CAPABLE AND APOLITICAL SENIOR OFFICERS.

PROTESTS FLAGGING

ANTI-REGIME DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN FEW THIS WEEK AND EASILY CONTROLLED BY THE MILITARY. MORE THAN 100 TEACHERS WERE NOT HARASSED WHEN THEY DEMONSTRATED WEDNESDAY IN FRONT OF THE EDUCATION MINISTRY TO DEMAND THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS, CASH SALARY PAYMENTS, AND DEMOCRATIC REFORMS. POLICE HAVE RELEASED ALL PERSONS ARRESTED LAST WEEK FOR CIVIL CRUSADE-SPONSORED OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES. ALTHOUGH CRUSADE LEADERS PLAN TO BEGIN ANOTHER ROUND OF PROTESTS SOON, THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT OBTAINING ENOUGH FUNDS FOR PAYING OUT THOSE WHO MAY BE ARRESTED. AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE SOLIS PALMA, PANAMA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS LIFTED THE STATE OF EMERGENCY ESTABLISHED LAST MONTH.

THE ASSEMBLY'S ACTION INDICATES THE REGIME IS CONFIDENT OF ITS ABILITY TO CONTROL PROTESTS AND DOES NOT ANTICIPATE SIGNIFICANT UNREST IN THE NEAR TERM. LIFTING THE EMERGENCY LEGISLATION PROBABLY IS ALSO INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE PERCEPTIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD THAT THE REGIME IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL AND NORMALCY HAS RETURNED.

2. PAKISTAN: AFGHANISTAN POLICY STEADY UNDER FIRE

MANY PAKISTANIS GREETED THE GENEVA ACCORDS LAST WEEK WITH RELIEF AND GUARDED OPTIMISM, BUT PRESIDENT ZIA AND PRIME MINISTER JUNEJO ARE UNDER INCREASING ATTACK OVER THE AGREEMENT FROM POLITICAL OPPONENTS.

PUBLIC REACTION TO THE GENEVA ACCORDS IN PUNJAB PROVINCE GENERALLY HAS BEEN LAUDATORY, DESPITE A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE PROBLEMS AHEAD. IN THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE--WHERE MANY OF THE ESTIMATED 3 MILLION REFUGEES ARE LOCATED--HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT CONTINUING TO SUPPLY ARMS TO THE RESISTANCE COULD PROLONG THE FIGHTING AND DISCOURAGE THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES. OPPOSITION LEADER BENAZIR BHUTTO HAS CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE ACCORDS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE AGREEMENT WILL NEITHER PREVENT CIVIL WAR IN AFGHANISTAN NOR GUARANTEE THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES.

MANY PUNJAB OPPOSITION LEADERS ALSO ARE BLAMING ZIA FOR THE 10 APRIL EXPLOSION OF AN AMMUNITION DUMP NEAR RAWALPINDI AND ARE CALLING FOR HIS RESIGNATION AS CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF. ACCOUNTS ALLEGED THAT THE DEPOT WAS TRANSSHIPPING ARMS FOR THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE. MANY PAKISTANIS BELIEVE WEAPONS DESTINED FOR THE RESISTANCE WERE INVOLVED IN THE EXPLOSION. AT LEAST TWO OPPOSITION PARTIES SAY THEY MAY SUE THE US OVER THE EXPLOSION, MAINTAINING THAT THE US OWNED THE WEAPONS THAT WERE DESTROYED IN THE EXPLOSION.

MOST PAKISTANIS SEEM WILLING TO RESERVE JUDGMENT ON

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THE ACCORDS. THE OPPOSITION HAS MADE THE ACCORDS A POLITICAL ISSUE AND WILL TRY TO USE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL TO ITS ADVANTAGE. ZIA IS TAKING THE BRUNT OF THE CRITICISM FOR THE EXPLOSION BECAUSE HE IS PAKISTAN'S CHIEF MILITARY LEADER, AND MANY PAKISTANIS BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO JEOPARDIZE INNOCENT PAKISTANI LIVES FOR THE RESISTANCE. FOR NOW, HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITION IS WEAK--BENAZIR BHUTTO IS IN LONDON FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT--AND ISLAMABAD'S SUPPORT FOR THE RESISTANCE REMAINS FIRM.

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4. INDIA-AFGHANISTAN: GANDHI TO MEET WITH NAJIBULLAH

PRIME MINISTER GANDHI'S INVITATION WEDNESDAY TO AFGHAN PRESIDENT NAJIBULLAH TO VISIT NEW DELHI INDICATES INDIA INTENDS TO PLAY A ROLE IN POSTSETTLEMENT AFGHANISTAN. GANDHI MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN A SPEECH WELCOMING THE GENEVA ACCORDS AND ASSERTING THAT INDIA HAS VITAL STAKES IN A STABLE AFGHANISTAN; HE ADDED THAT PAKISTAN HAD REJECTED A REQUEST FOR A MEETING IN NEW DELHI TO CONSULT ON AFGHANISTAN.

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GANDHI ALMOST CERTAINLY SCHEDULED THE VISIT TO REMIND PAKISTAN OF INDIA'S INTERESTS IN POSTSETTLEMENT AFGHANISTAN. GANDHI WOULD ALSO LIKE TO TEMPER THE POWER OF FUNDAMENTALISTS IN ANY NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT AND PROBABLY WILL DISCUSS WITH NAJIBULLAH INITIATIVES INDIA CAN TAKE TO INFLUENCE THE COMPOSITION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. HE MAY OFFER NAJIBULLAH SAFEHAVEN IF THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT FALLS, PERHAPS IN THE BELIEF THAT HE CAN TAKE A STEP TOWARD MENDING FENCES WITH THE MUSLIM RESISTANCE BY FACILITATING NAJIBULLAH'S EXIT.

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5. IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

X--HIZBALLAH ANNOUNCED IN LEBANON IT WILL TRY LT. COL HIGGINS FOR SPYING, PROBABLY TO REEMPHASIZE HIS VULNERABILITY . . . MAY BE PART OF IRANIAN-DIRECTED CAMPAIGN FOLLOWING GULF FIGHTING . . . UNLIKELY TO BE KILLED.

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